



Legislation Text

File #: 20-0350, Version: 1

Recommendation to request City Manager to work with the Office of Equity to establish a policy requiring a health equity lens statement on all staff reports related to COVID-19 impacts and response.

Further, request the Office of Equity to train the Joint Information Center on utilization of the Long Beach Equity Toolkit.

The Problem

On March 4th, 2020, the City of Long Beach declared an emergency in response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Between March 9th and April 17th, the City's number of confirmed cases has grown to 406, with 18 of those total cases resulting in fatalities.

On April 13th, Long Beach released demographic data on confirmed cases of COVID-19. An emergent trend in the data indicates a disproportionately large health impact on people of color, and in particular, African Americans who account for 16.8% of the City's cases and 21% of the hospitalizations, exceeding the 12.9% share of the City's population.

Race/Ethnicity	+ Cases %*	Hospitalized %	LB POD %
Hispanic/Latino	35.2	33.75	42.5
White	26.7	22.5	28.1
African American	14.3	21.25	12.9
Asian	15.2	13.75	13.1
Other	8.6	8.75	N/A

*Race/ethnicity data were available for 61% of those with a positive diagnosis. The percentages are of the 187 cases where data were available.

These statistics corroborate racial impact data from the County, as well across the country where Black people in Milwaukee, Louisiana, and Chicago have represented up to 70% of COVID-19 related deaths in certain jurisdictions.

Most recently, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) supported Senator Elizabeth Warren and Congresswoman Ayana Pressley's call for an emphasis on racial equity in the response to COVID-19. The ACLU also urged Governor Gavin Newsom to require the state and local governments to collect comprehensive racial and ethnic data to ensure an accurate understanding of the COVID-19 impact.

While all communities are impacted by this pandemic, its impact on minority populations is

disproportionate. This highlights large disparities within our city, including inequities within our health care delivery system, a lack of open space and proximity to transportation corridors, and historic economic disparities.

The Opportunity

Launched in 2017 within the Long Beach Department of Health and Human Services, the Office of Equity strives for a city where everyone can reach their highest level of health and potential for a successful life, regardless of background, neighborhood, or identity.

The Office of Equity provides several key strategies to be used citywide including, the use of data to highlight systemic and racial inequities and expanding our City's capacity to advance equity through training, tools, and technical assistance. The office has developed an equity toolkit for use by city staff in several areas which align with core city operations.

It is clear, given the information that we have available, our response to the COVID-19 pandemic should acknowledge health and racial equity in the city's decision-making process.

Many jurisdictions are creating offices or personnel dedicated to managing the municipality's racial equity efforts and coordinating across arms of local government. Cities can make policies to develop this infrastructure or to build racial equity assessment processes into regular government functions. Any of these practices are listed by the league cities. <https://www.nlc.org/resource/building-dedicatedgovernance-infrastructure-for-racial-equity>

Equity impact assessments when evaluating policies are currently practiced in several states including California, Texas Washington, Minneapolis, and Madison. Requiring an equity lens on all COVID-19 related staff reports is a critical and necessary aspect of our COVID-19 response.

Statement of Urgency

Due to the nature of the COVID-19 pandemic consideration of this item is urgent in nature.

Due to the urgent nature of this request, no fiscal impact statement was available.

Approve recommendation.

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